



Rural Utilities Service Environmental Review Process McClellanville Transmission Line Proposal

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Utilities Service (RUS) is considering providing financial assistance to Central Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. (Central Electric) to construct a proposed 115 kV transmission line in Berkeley, Charleston, and/or Georgetown Counties, SC. The line would provide reliable power to Berkeley Electric Cooperative customers in the McClellanville area. Prior to making a decision to finance a proposal, RUS is required to complete an environmental review process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Following an initial set of public and agency meetings held in December 2005, RUS decided to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposal. Because the proposal may cross the Francis Marion National Forest, the U.S. Forest Service is a cooperating agency.

The forthcoming EIS will assess potential impacts that the proposal may have on the human environment and may include:

- Land Use
- Plants & Wildlife
- Wetlands & Floodplains
- Cultural Resources & Historic Properties
- Human Health & Public Safety
- Socioeconomics
- Environmental Justice
- Visual

Public Scoping Meetings and Hearings

The RUS NEPA process provides numerous opportunities for public review and submission of comments. Following the conclusion of the scoping period, RUS will evaluate comments and consult with agencies to develop the scope of issues that will be considered in the EIS. Public comments often identify local concerns about a proposal and may influence implementation of a decision.

The public scoping process serves multiple goals for the proposal, including:

- Solicitation of comments from the public & private organizations
- Receipt of new information about alternatives
- Identification of impacts that may be significant

To track EIS development, download comment forms, and access public documentation about the proposal, please visit the RUS web site at: <http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/eis.htm>.

For more information and to submit written comments, please contact:

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Detailed Steps of the RUS EIS-Process

September 2010

Publish Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS and hold scoping meetings in local newspapers and the *Federal Register*.

September 2010

Hold meetings and receive comments on scope of EIS.
*Comments Due:
January 14, 2011*

Compile and summarize public and agency comments.

February 2011

Issue Scoping Summary Report.

Continue to review and evaluate comments received during scoping.

Spring/Summer 2011

Issue a Scoping Decision.

Conduct studies and prepare Draft EIS.



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Documents currently available for public viewing: AES and MCS

Alternatives Evaluation Study (AES):

- Identifies problem
- Evaluates ways of solving the problem
- Concludes with the best solution to the problem ("Proposed Action" or "Proposal")

Macro-Corridor Study (MCS):

- Provides background information about a proposal area
- Identifies ways to implement a Proposed Action ("Proposed Action Alternatives")

PUBLIC & AGENCY SCOPING (comments due: Jan 14, 2011)

Receive additional information from the public and agencies about the Proposed Action Alternatives. RUS will use the information provided during scoping to determine the issues that will be considered in the EIS.

Documents that will be available for public viewing/review:

- Scoping Summary Report: summarizes public and agency comments received during the scoping period
- Scoping Decision: summarizes issues that will be considered in the EIS; identifies the Proposed Action Alternatives that will be considered in detail in the EIS
- Draft EIS: analyzes impacts that the proposal may have on the human environment
- Final EIS: summarizes and responds to public and agency comments regarding the draft EIS; updates the Draft EIS
- Record of Decision (ROD): concludes the RUS NEPA process; summarizes the environmental conditions that will be implemented if RUS were to finance the proposal

** If a preferred action alternative crosses the Francis Marion National Forest, the U.S. Forest Service may issue a separate ROD for its federal action (e.g., possible issuance of a special use permit). This ROD would be subject to an appeals process as prescribed in the U.S. Forest Service's departmental regulations.*

Issue Draft EIS and publish Notice of Availability (NOA) of Draft EIS in local newspapers and *Federal Register*.
Comments Due: 45 days after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) receives draft EIS

Summer/Fall 2012
Hold Public Hearings & Receive Comments on Draft EIS.

Review and evaluate comments received.
Update EIS.

Issue Final EIS and publish NOA of Final EIS in local newspapers and *Federal Register*.
Review period: 30 days following the EPA receipt of Final EIS

Public and Agency Review of Final EIS.

Issue ROD and publish NOA of ROD in local newspapers and *Federal Register*.